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ISRAEL

Palestinian nationalist candidates in the Israeli-occupied West Bank scored large wins in the municipal council elections on Monday, but the presence of conservatives on many councils will prevent supporters of the Palestine Liberation Organization from securing complete control of local administrations.

Many of the victorious "nationalist" slates appear to be collections of councilors representing many shades of political opinion, from traditionally conservative clan factions to radicals sympathetic to the PLO. These men have often had little more in common than their agreement to run together and to try to attract the widest possible spectrum of votes.

Leftist-oriented slates won majorities on the councils of two of the West Bank's three most populous towns—Nabulus and Ram Allah—and in a number of smaller towns. In Hebron, long a conservative stronghold, a conglomerate, including both leftist sympathizers and conservatives, gained control of the municipal council. Conservatives won in one major town—Bethlehem—and appear to have gained majorities on councils in several smaller communities.

The strong showing by candidates sympathetic to the PLO represents a protest against the Israeli occupation government and is a setback for Tel Aviv's support of traditionalist, pro-Jordanian council candidates. In the future, the Israelis will probably be increasingly faced with a politically outspoken group of West Bank nationalist leaders less willing to cooperate with occupation authorities to administer the territory.



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During the next two weeks, the new councils will each convene to name one of their members, usually the highest vote-getter, as mayor. A large number of nationalists will probably be chosen, since they are the front-runners on many councils.

Israeli occupation officials can veto these selections, however, and appoint mayors more to their liking. Queried on this possibility last week, Defense Minister Peres, the cabinet minister responsible for administering the West Bank, said the military government there would accept the decisions of the councils unless there was a "legal reason" for doing otherwise.

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Israeli intervention in the mayoral elections could ignite a new round of anti-Israeli demonstrations or riots similar to those that took place in February and March.

Voter turnout for the elections was heavy, although somewhat lower than anticipated. Votes were cast by 72 percent of all registered voters and by 69 percent of registered women voters, who were casting ballots for the first time.

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SPAIN

Spain's most important democratic trade union will open its annual congress this week against a backdrop of demonstrations planned to focus attention on the government's apparent inability to push through reforms the union considers crucial.

The illegal Socialist General Union of Workers will hold its four-day congress in Madrid beginning tomorrow—the first meeting of its kind to be held openly in Spain since the end of the Civil War. Interior Minister Fraga told the US ambassador last week that the congress would be authorized only at the last minute as a sign of his displeasure at the union's participation in the merger last month of the two opposition coalitions.

The congress will have to make important decisions concerning the future course of the Socialist union. It is expected to opt for pluralism in Spanish labor—in contrast to the Communists' unitary approach—although this may be balanced by a statement favoring unity-of-action tactics with all other trade union forces.

The congress is also likely to rule against allowing high-level union officials to hold top positions in the Socialist Workers' Party and to decide on far-reaching changes in the union's leadership. There are indications, however, that the followers of Socialist leader Felipe Gonzalez and the Basque faction of the union will maintain control, ensuring continued emphasis on close ties with other West European trade unions.

In an effort to enhance its international image and bolster domestic support, the union has invited high-level foreign observers to attend the congress, including representatives of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the European Trade Union Confederation, and various international trade secretariats. Many of these organizations will be sending their top officials to demonstrate support for trade union and political liberties in Spain. Most conspicuous by its absence will be the British Trades Union Congress, which reportedly does not want to offend the Socialists' rival, the Communist-dominated workers' commissions.

The union meeting will focus attention on Madrid's seeming inability to get important reforms off the ground, especially long overdue changes in the government-controlled Spanish Syndical Organization—the only legal labor group in Spain. Because of increasingly open resistance from the far right, the government's reform proposals will probably not be unveiled until the Syndical Organization congress in July. The government had hoped to move earlier to offset anticipated labor disturbances.

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Demonstrations are expected tomorrow on the anniversary of the Second Republic, although they may be defused in part by King Juan Carlos' decree granting pensions to Republican veterans. Rallies by extremists are also possible on Easter Sunday, the day Basques celebrate their "national" day. The turnout on Easter may be reduced, however, by the decision of the Basque government in exile, supported by some Basque parties and labor organizations, to call off the celebrations because of the tense situation in the Basque area. Such demonstrations would reportedly serve as dry runs for massive turnouts for international labor day on May 1.

The government's only public response so far has been to schedule a television address by Prime Minister Arias for April 20. Arias will list the government's achievements and outline its future plans, but judging from his past performances, he is unlikely to inspire confidence in the government's zeal for reform.

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FRANCE

The planned nationwide strike tomorrow by radical French student and teacher organizations could pose problems for the Giscard government.

Activists representing about 5 percent of France's 800,000 university students have been preparing for the strike since about mid-March with a series of protests, some of which involved confrontations with police. The students, supported by some teacher unions, are opposing the government's proposed university reforms, which include:

- Modifying science and humanities curricula to assure that graduates are better prepared for the job market.
- Permitting more selectivity in admissions standards.
- Shortening the time required to earn certain degrees.
- Reducing the number of teachers trained.

The activists complain that unemployment is so high that graduates have little chance of finding a job related to their training; they maintain that the government's response to this problem is a sell-out to big business. Student organizations say that about 100,000 graduates last year still cannot find jobs. The government refuses to back down and says the reforms will go ahead as scheduled. Officials add that demonstrators who fail required courses disrupted by the strikes will not graduate this year.

The organizers of the strike tomorrow hope workers and farmers will also take to the streets as they did during the demonstrations in May 1968. Delegates reportedly have been chosen to contact representatives of labor groups, which have also registered discontent over the government's handling of social and economic problems. Despite the volatile atmosphere at the universities, French officials do not anticipate a repetition of the serious turmoil in 1968.

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MOROCCO - WEST GERMANY: Morocco recently concluded an agreement with a West German manufacturer to purchase 75 UR-416 armored trucks modified for troop transport in desert operations. The contract calls for delivery of 18 vehicles a month, beginning in September. The cost of the purchase is about \$5 million. It is not yet known whether Bonn has granted export approval for the vehicles. The UR-416, a Mercedes truck with steel plating, is regarded as an internal security vehicle, not a military combat item, and thus may not be subject to the West German law forbidding the export of war materiel to areas of tension. The promised early delivery schedule appears to have weighed in Morocco's decision to purchase these vehicles, despite the maintenance problems that the addition of West German equipment to the Moroccan inventory will entail.



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